

## Press release

Rotterdam, 31st January 2007

### **Princess Laurentien presents starter package Taalkracht (Language Strength) for towns**

**Her Royal Highness Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands today presented the starter package 'Taalkracht voor gemeenten' by Stichting Lezen & Schrijven. The princess, chairwoman and founder of the foundation presented the package to secretary of state Ross-van Dorp van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport (National Health, Welfare and Sports) during the congress 'Delen in Verandering, samenwerken aan de Wmo' (Sharing in Change, collaborating on the Wmo) at AHOY Rotterdam. The starter package supports towns while tackling low literacy on a local level.**

The new Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning (Wmo) (Bill social support), which has become active on 1st January 2007, has as objective that everybody can participate in society. Towns will apply the Wmo. Each town will place personal emphasis.

During the congress, involved managers and executers gave examples of how they will use the Wmo to the ultimate. Magreet de Vries, director of Stichting Lezen & Schrijven: "Tackling low literacy makes a seamless connection with the Wmo: better reading and writing skills ensure the participation of more people. Besides, a structural approach of low literacy can make a contribution to diminish unemployment and literacy has a positive effect on people's health."

With *Taalkracht voor gemeenten*, Stichting Lezen & Schrijven wants to activate and support towns to tackle low literacy on a local level. Nationally, some 10 percent of the adult population is low literate. These figures differ barely on a local level. While tackling low literacy it does not only concern the reduction of the current amount of low-literate people. Towns should also be committed to prevent reading and writing problems.

Besides suggestions and practical addresses, the package also offers concrete examples of towns which have already started the project. The town of the Hague for instance stimulates accessible vocabulary amongst civil servants with the campaign 'Helder Haags' (clear Hague language) and adults with reading and writing problems can get together at the Makkelijk Lezen Plein (Easy Read Square) at the library of Alphen aan den Rijn. The town of Schiedam broadcasted commercials to stimulate people to attend a reading and writing course. The package is developed in the context of the 'Van A tot Z betrokken', Aanvalsplan Laaggeletterdheid 2006-2010 (Involved from A to Z, attack plan low literacy) of the department of Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap.

Stichting Lezen & Schrijven was founded in May 2004 by H.R.H. Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands. The foundation is committed to prevent and reduce low literacy and to embed tackling this issue within society. Previously in the *Taalkracht* series: *Taalkr8!* (for vocational colleges), *Taalkracht voor bedrijven* (Language strength for companies) and *Taalkracht voor consultatiebureaus* (Language strength for child health centres).

---

**Note for the editors, not for publication:**

In case of questions, please address Stichting Lezen & Schrijven, Margreet de Vries [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

General information about Stichting Lezen & Schrijven can be found at [www.lezenenschrijven.nl](http://www.lezenenschrijven.nl)

For more information about Taalkracht voor Gemeenten: [www.taalkrachtvoorgemeenten.nl](http://www.taalkrachtvoorgemeenten.nl)

For more information about the Wmo: [www.info-wmo.nl](http://www.info-wmo.nl)